

Sheryl Fucci, RDH
February 23, 2017
DDS Cuts

My name is Sheryl Fucci and I am a Dental Hygienist 2 at the Ella Grasso campus.

Thank you to the co-chairs, Senator Osten, Senator Formica, and Representative Walker, and esteemed members of the Appropriations Committee.

I am testifying today to urge the committee to reject the \$25 million in cuts that the Governor has proposed to DDS. The Governor's budget includes the closure of Ella Grasso. The individuals who were provided with ICF services are no longer living at Grasso--- but the dental clinic has not closed. We currently care for over 500 individuals with ID/DD that live with their families, independently with supports and in private and public group homes.

In my eleven years as the dental hygienist at the Ella Grasso Clinic, my team and I have worked very hard to provide the ideal environment for ID/DD community to successfully receive dental services. On paper, it appears that most of our clients should be able to receive services in the community with their Title 19 benefits. However, while many of the clients are able to use private services and do, many are not successful. At the Ella Grasso Clinic, we are able to be flexible in regards to behaviors that many in the private community would be unable to accommodate. We also provide vital services that are not covered under their Title 19 plan, including but not limited to desensitization, more frequent cleanings, periodontal treatment, root canal therapy, mouth guards and crowns. Through many years of experience we are able to tailor our care to each individual, taking into consideration their fears, heightened anxiety, physical and intellectual limitations as well as the specific dental issues facing the ID/DD patient. We understand the medical compromises including aspiration risk, mobility issues with the ultimate goal for many being transition to the private dental community. Although for many of the patients the ideal dental home for them is a clinic like Ella Grasso, and in some cases we coordinate dozens of cases a year of comprehensive dental services under general anesthesia at Ct hospitals that provide care in the OR.

It is so very important to continue and even expand these services to prevent dental disease that can result in unnecessary dental pain, tooth loss and systemic medical infections that we know can be directly related to dental disease.

I'm here today to urge you to publicly commit to keeping the Ella Grasso clinic as well as the three other DDS dental clinics open. Please agree to pull together stakeholders who would look at ways to expand dental services to the ID/DD community- including those on the waiting list, those who need services not covered under Title 19, those who can't use community dental clinics, and those who are currently on long waiting lists for dental services.

Thank you,
Sheryl Fucci, RDH